

**Idaho Panhandle RAC Meeting Notes
June 17, 2011**

Committee Attending: Jon Cantamessa, Jack Buell, Shawn Keough, Barbara Botsch, Terry Steiner, Jackie McAvoy, MaryBeth Lynch, Joe Peak, Ruth Watkins, Neil Smith, Joe Peak, Robin Stanley, Maggie Pittman

Others Present: Karen Roetter, (Senator Crapo), Sid Smith (Senator Risch), Judy Morbeck, (Congressman Labradour), Dan Dinning (Boundary County), Kim Johnson (USFS), Sam Gibbons (USFS), Wade Sims (USFS), Glenn Klinger (USFS), Jay Kirchner (USFS), Linda McFadden (USFS), Shanda Dekome (USFS), Steve Johnson (USFS)

Sid Smith spoke for the Congressional Delegation – all of the Idaho Senators/Congressman are working hard to help get the legislation reauthorized.

Jon Cantamessa opened the meeting sharing information about the requirements of the legislation to fund projects prior to the September 30th deadline. Jack hopes the legislation is refunded – it is one of the best committee's he sits on and truly gets funds to get work done on the ground. Shawn Keough – worked on a committee to submit a letter asking that the legislation be reauthorized. The letter was approved by both the State House and Senate. Terry – concerned that the economy may cause problems with the reauthorization. Talked about a project led by Bud Bailey (BCH) that will do work in Trail Creek area. The project will compliment the ridge trail the RAC helped fund several years ago. Jackie – did her annual walk with the fifth graders regarding forestry. It is so important for our young folks to understand forestry issues. MaryBeth – she too said this committee is the best she has been on and it gets so much work done. Joe Peak – he reiterated that this is the best committee – it gets things done and he is proud to have served. His stem cell transplant is so far successful and he is making great progress. He appreciates the committee's support throughout his illness. Ruth – wants to continue to do whatever we can to help lobby support for the legislation. Neil – echoed the comments by the rest of the committee in support of the reauthorization. Bob – been traveling helping get his family back to the US from their long stay in Kenya. Robin – explained the need for Shoshone Co to put more into Title III to help support the fuels reduction work that is happening around the communities. The funds last year supported a substantial amount of work and more is planned for 2012. The parking lot and vault toilet that the RAC helped support at Mullan has been extremely successful. There is a proposal for the RAC to consider that adds more gravel to help support some areas of the lot that need bolstering. Maggie Pittman – Will be filling the role of the DFO behind Ranotta due to her retirement.

Project Review:

12_17 (\$27,000) Injection System Lorrie Jackson from Bonner County presented information on a proposal for a new spray injection system for the weed department. The system can be programmed for several specific treatments. The system saves money and waste of the chemicals. Maintenance is low and most can be done by the county.

12_16 (\$25,000) Weed Spray Truck Duke Guthrie from Boundary County discussed the request for a truck to use as a spot sprayer. It would particularly be effective where croplands border county and

federal lands. He thanked the RAC for their financial support in the past years, particularly when their county budgets are so tight – the RAC funds have helped their commitment to treating noxious weeds in the north Idaho area.

12_01 (\$100,350 or \$80,850) Timber Sale Prep Steve Johnson discussed the options – the higher option employs 10 workers; lower option employs 8. This support would a timber harvest level for fiscal year 2012. There was discussion about the timber market, the sales the forest has sold and what is pending. The long-term outlook for the timber industry is an incline by 2013.

12_02 (\$9,000) Pulaski Fuelwood Opportunity Sam Gibbons stated there are large landing piles in the Pulaski area that are salvageable and a good fuelwood opportunity. The proposal would fund a service contract to bring a processor to the site. There were concerns that the cost is steep.

12_03 (\$14,000) Fuelwood Program Manager Project provides public support in the CDA River RD area.

12_04 (\$50,000) Road 202 Repair Blue Alder TS The road is a public travelway but has slumped due to the wet spring/winter. This route is a specific route of haul for a portion of the timbersale. They will install cribbing and backfill to support the slope. Robin commented that it is a great match with the Forest Service and asked if they were to fund ½ would it help. The FS responded it would help but may they would have to find additional financial support to fully complete the project.

12_05 (\$50,000) Rock Creek Crushing Meadow Creek Pit would support road work on the proposed Meadow Creek timbersale. Neil encouraged the FS to consider a local site that can be stockpiled and avoid the setup/take down costs in the future.

12_06 (\$47,200) St Joe WP Pruning Crew Funds would employ approximately 6 summer employees to conduct blister rust pruning on the white pine. Neil stated the work that is done does benefit the survival of the species.

12_07 (\$50,000) Binarch Pit Crushing for timbersales Crushing operation to provide rock and riprap for the roads in the proposed Lower Priest and Quartz Cottonwood timber sales.

12_08 (\$12,900) NF CDA River Cleanup The proposal was presented last year but then reworked to employ more volunteers and partnerships. Joe liked the partnership funds involved in the project. A river corridor plan is being developed by the FS and the CDA River WAG and will be in place by December. Several RAC members suggested contacting companies such as Budweiser/Coors, etc for partner funds or in kind support.

12_09 (\$50,000) Elk Meadow Creek Culverts Project replaces two stream crossings on Meadow Creek.

12_10 (\$75,000) IPNF Road Maintenance

12_11 (\$14,500) Mullan Road Resurfacing

12_12 (\$41,000) Hells Canyon Trail Bridge Projects installs a single track trail bridge that will help prevent larger vehicles from damaging the mouth of the small stream and causing resource damage. Request would be a 50/50 with the Forest Service. IDPR has committed funds for the proposal also.

There was some discussion about possible alternatives instead of a bridge. The FS stated that alternatives were discussed but the best way to keep vehicles out of the creek is the bridge.

12_13 (\$18,000) IPNF Sanitation Program Proposal funds vault toilet pumping on all three zones on the forest.

Committee took time for a public comment period at 11 am. No comments from the public were received.

12_14 (\$9,000) Snowmobiles for Avalanche/Recreation support The proposal would help fund a snowmobile to replace the very old machine the district has. Currently the old machine is not able to access many of the areas that newer models can get to.

12_15 (\$9,000) Summer Host at Magee Project would support a host at the popular site.

12_18 (\$86,850) IPNF Noxious Weeds Proposal would fund noxious weed treatment throughout the forest

12_19 & 12_20 (\$5,000 each IFPC & PLT)

12_21 IPNF Recreation Ambassadors Proposal funds individuals on each zone that provide public contact which helps reduce vandalism and other issues. The program has been very successful throughout the forest.

12_22 IPNF Senior and Youth Crews

12_23 Twenty Mile Creek WUI/KVRI Landscape Approach Commissioner Dinning shared information about the effort underway by the City, County and KVRI to implement forest resources and resiliency activities in Boundary County. The final project would also protect the watershed for the Twenty Mile Water System. This request funds a facilitator and technical assistance to help implement the project. It is anticipated the facilitator would be a long term/monthly commitment. It is Boundary County's number one priority.

Project Funding Recommendations:

Committee discussed strategies for funding proposals. Terry and Robin suggested looking at funding at lower levels due to the lower amount of funds this year. Shawn asked if any retained receipts from stewardship projects are available to the forest in lieu of title II funds. Joe stated he is supportive of the injection spray system but may not support another vehicle.

MaryBeth stated that she is not supportive of some of the work in 12_11 – approximately \$2,500 could be reduced from the proposal and suggested that Lucky Friday mine or Back Country Horseman be asked to partner for the project.

Discussed project 12_12, Hells Canyon Bridge, and suggested looking for other options instead of an \$80,000 bridge. Also wondered if this is the highest priority for recreation on the district.

Several members supported reducing the amount requested for Recreation Ambassadors to \$60,000

Discussed 12_2, Pulaski Fuelwood. Many concerns about the cost of the contractor. Are there other options, otherwise the cost per cord is too high.

The Committee would like to know if there is an option in terms of the haul route for 12_4 that could be cheaper. Would also like to know the type of stabilization work to be performed.

The Committee listed the projects they were interested in funding and the proposed amounts associated with each:

12_11 Mullan Road Surfacing \$14,500 - amount reduced to \$12,000
12_08 CDA River Cleanup \$12,900
12_23 Twentymile/KVRI Support \$25,000 – amount reduced to \$20,000
12_13 IPNF Sanitation \$18,000
12_19 Project Learning Tree \$5000
12_20 Forest Tours for Opinion Leaders \$5000
12_01 Forestwide Timber Sale Prep \$80,850
12_17 Bonner County Weed Spray System \$27,000
12_14 Snowmobile for Avalanche/Recreation Support \$9,000
12_15 Magee Host \$3,300
12_21 IPNF Recreation Ambassadors \$60,000
12_22 IPNF Youth/Senior Programs \$200,000
12_10 IPNF Road Maintenance \$75,000
12_03 Fuels Program Manager \$14,000
12_18 IPNF Noxious Weeds \$60,000

Total project value \$602,050

Jack Buell motioned that the Committee recommend funding for the projects as listed and hold on approving any additional projects until the next meeting. Ruth Watkins seconded the motion. **All were in favor of recommending the projects, as listed, for funding.**

The committee also established a new project, 12_24 titled IPNF Road Repair in the amount of \$188,000. This proposal would focus on road repair across the forest due to the heavy runoff this past spring.

The committee will meet again on Friday, September 16 to review projects and finalize funding recommendations.